

West Wickham Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at
bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in
touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library
where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since
the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1900 07 15

Saffron Walden & the district have been scenes of daring and successful robberies, chiefly at farms, and harness and fowls formed the major part of the booty. The premises of John Collins, Skippers Hall, West Wickham were visited and a set of black leather cob harness, value 40s. was taken away. At Great Thurlow the thieves visited Hunt's Hall and cleared off a set of brass-mounted harness. To complete a good night's work, as far as the thieves were concerned, they turned their steps towards Exhibition Farm, Wethersfield, where they took a riding saddle. By Friday the police were well on the scent of the miscreants. They journeyed to London, found the bulk of the stolen property in Kilburn & arrested two men in bed.

1900 10 03

At the meeting at Linton to revise the voters' lists Mr Holtum objected to the name of Henry Webb in respect of a farm at West Wickham. Mr Hutt said the farm had been occupied by members of the Webb family for 146 years. Last Michaelmas the father wanted to give up the farm and the landlord accepted the son as tenant, but he stipulated that as long as Mr Webb sen. lived he should live in the house, thinking it a pity the old gentleman should turn out of the farm where he had resided for 46 years

1909 01 29

Mr Rose, MP, toured his constituency by motor car and had an enthusiastic welcome from old age pensioners many of whom had their pension books in their hands. At Balsham one old fellow, trembling with gratitude, had just drawn his ten shilling pension. "I remember working all day long for eight shillings a week for my wife and I to live on. Why we be gentlefolk now, picking up ten shillings every week and nothing to do for it", he said. At West Wickham the children stormed the car and would be satisfied with nothing but a ride. CWN 09 01 29

1910 02 04

The Chequers public house, Shudy Camps stood on a side road at the Horseheath end of the village. There was a house on the main road within about half-a-mile and only 18 private houses near. The pub was in good order, having been rebuilt 10 years ago. It sold a barrel of beer a week and had no spirit licence. It was not required, police told magistrates. They also objected to the George and Dragon at Linton, a beerhouse off the main thoroughfare. There was no trade done there, they were simply selling off stock. The Crown was about 130 yards away. also: Pampisford brewery and problems with pubs at West Wickham, West Wrating, Ickleton with note on number of pubs in each village. 10 02 04 I & j & k

1914 11 06

Belgians – Littleport, Burwell, Chatteris, Duxford, Comberton, Sawston, Elsworth, Fen Drayton, Swavesey, Fordham, West Wickham, Wicken, Gamlingay, Willingham, Madingley, Isleham, Landbeach, Linton, Lode, Oakington,

1920 01 07

Rats killed. Up to December 3rd last the number of rats killed in the county and paid for by Cambs County Council under the Rats Order, was 35,516. The districts concerned were: Little Abington (number of rats killed 504), Ashley (980), Balsham (2,718), Borough Green (358), Bottisham (999), Cheveley (631). Chippenham (838), Great Chishill (322), Croxton (225), Dullingham (1,205), Duxford (754), Elsworth (39), Fordham (8,072), Fowlmere (489), Harston (322), Hauxton (186). Heydon (1,593), Hildersham (236). Horseheath (324), Ickleton (1,095), Isleham (3,809), Kennett (1,422). Kirtling (396), Kneesworth (549), Linton (584), Lode (548), Melbourn (442), Newton (160), Pampisford (429), Sawston (332), Shepreth (313). Shudy Camps (1.38), Snailwell (786), Soham (2,896), Stetchworth (1,105) Swaffham Prior (1,032), Thriplow (464), Waterbeach (967), West Wickham (995), Whittlesford (324), Great Wilbraham (846), Wood Ditton (2,017).

1925 09 03

Linton Rural District Council congratulated themselves on the latest movement in their house building campaign. Houses are to be built at Balsham at £400 or less apiece – assuming free sites can be obtained. On these conditions rents of 4s 6d a week are to be charged and the cost to the rates is only a farthing in the £. They were also likely to be able to build houses at West Wickham and Carlton and there were vacant sites at Sawston & Hildersham. The Government would give £12.10s a year for 40 years for every cottage built.

1926 02 19

Linton RDC received an application on behalf of Clare College to a subsidy for the erection of a pair of cottages at Ickleton. Mr Brocklebank said the grant was to enable cottages to be built which could not be built if the grant were not given. He could not conceive that the Mater, Fellows and Scholars of Clare College were unable to afford to build these cottages. The council applied for permission to borrow money for the erection of 12 cottages in the parishes of Carlton, West Wickham and Hildersham

1927 04 21

A farmer of Skippers Hall, West Wickham was successful in a house possession case brought because of arrears of rent. The tenant said the place was in bad repair, the floors were in a bad state and if he had not wired them the windows would have fallen out. The farmer said there was nothing wrong with the house and he had done the repairs. The rent was 2s.6d. a week

1928 10 05

An inquest at West Wickham heard how a roadman met his death by falling from the back of a steam roller. The driver said the deceased had been sitting on the tool box at the back of the engine, which was towing four vehicles. At church corner the man was all right but when he got round the corner a man shouted at him and he ran back to find his colleague dead on the road in a pool of blood. The body was left lying in the road for an hour before a policeman came and it was moved. The coroner said that if people found a man hanging or anything like that it was their duty morally to cut him down and try and save his life. It was not necessary to wait for a policeman.

1930 04 30

Damage amounting to thousands of pounds was done by an extensive fire at Mr Owen Webb's farm at Streetly Hall, West Wickham. A number of valuable pedigree heifers, calves and pigs lost their lives and a great many farming implements and machinery, together with a motor car, farm carts and a large quantity of grain were destroyed. One of the buildings destroyed was an old thatched barn, one of the largest in the country with solid oak beams which once formed part of a church. The farm foreman was burned on the arms and legs when an oil tank exploded. With his clothing on fire he rushed into the pond at the bottom of the farmyard and extinguished the flames

1940 01 19

Cambs. Sailor Hero. The inhabitants of the little Cambs. village of West Wickham look like preparing a big welcome for their sailor hero, Sam Brown, when he returns home in a few days. On Thursday Sam Brown became the hero of the 1,700-ton London steamer Keynes, which was attacked and sunk by Nazi bombers in the North Sea. Firing the ship's only machine-gun, Brown staved off the first attack and, to quote him, "I saw several hits, and I think the airmen were rather worried by my fire, and the plane eventually made off." Later Sam Brown had a man to man engagement with a second and larger bomber. Sam Brown is a single man of 41. He joined the Navy as a boy of 13, and served in the Great War. He was a gunner of a battle cruiser which took part in the battle of the Falkland Isles. After the war he continued to serve as an A.B. and completed 24 years' service before retiring on a pension in February of 1936. Returning to civilian life, Brown obtained a job on an aerodrome, and was thus employed until he was called up at the outbreak of the present conflict. His mother and father are both dead, and in civilian life Brown lived at home with his unmarried sister, Miss Doris Brown, who looks after the home. Brown, who lost an elder brother in the Great War while serving in the Suffolks, is one of a family of 13. Miss Brown said that her brother had wired her that he was safe and that all the crew were saved. "He did not mention any part he took in the encounter, but we are proud of him." A younger brother said "Good old brother. We'll have a celebration when he comes home —and what a celebration!"

1943 03 12

Married 50 Years. Mr and Mrs Beavis, of West Wickham, celebrated the 50th anniversary of their wedding day yesterday. They were married at the Parish Church on March 11, 1893, and have lived in the village all their lives. Mr Beavis, who "is 75, still continues work, Mrs Beavis, who is 72, is a collector for Addenbrooke's Hospital Maintenance Fund. They have had three sons and three daughters, but have lost two of the latter. There are 21 grandchildren.

1951 11 20

Agriculture has suffered a severe loss in the passing of Mr Samuel Owen Webb at his home at Streetly Hall, West Wickham. He was grandson of Jonas Webb to whom a statue was erected in the Corn Exchange. He was the founder and first president of the Cambridgeshire Farmers' Federation. In the 1914-18 war he was appointed chairman of the War Agricultural Committee and again during the second war. A keen showman he helped re-form the Cambs Agricultural Society which became one of the largest shows in the country

1953 12 16

Four meteor jet fighters crashed in the Duxford area; three pilots parachuted to safety and one was pulled from his wrecked plane by farm workers. They were on a training flight from Waterbeach airfield and were not in collision in the air before crashing. It is possible the pilots abandoned their machines after running short of fuel. It is the second time that a plane has crashed at White House Farm, West Wickham; a Meteor came down at the back of the farm just before harvest.

1962 04 01

Fire swept a Horseheath farm causing thousands of pounds work of damage. The 16th century Tudor style College farmhouse on the West Wickham Road was gutted and flames roared into the thatch of nearby farm buildings. About £1,000 worth of stock was scattered into the mud of the stockyard with seconds to spare as burning thatch began to collapse. The fire was spotted by Arthur Tinney of Manor Farm who raced into the barns and let out bullocks, pigs and chickens worth altogether about £1,000. 62 04 01

1970 01 06

U.F.O. over West Wickham rattles roof – 70 01 06

1985 07 05

The centuries-old Chequers pub in Streetly End which was gutted by fire earlier this year is to be sold as a private house. It had been closed before the blaze which ripped through its thatched roof. Brewers Greene King say there are too few people in the area and the White Horse at nearby West Wickham had just reopened after a long closure. But there was nothing against somebody running it as a pub if they wished. The Fox and Hounds at Weston Colville which closed last week is also to be sold with a licence. 85 07 05a

1989 04 04

The clock at West Wickham church has been removed for an overhaul. It has an unusual lozenge-shaped clock face and is at least 200 years old. It was installed in September 1954 after being brought from St Peter's church, Duxford, where it had been since 1791. Now the clock, originally made by John Warner of Fleet Street, will be overhauled by Peter Watt of Balsham and provided with electrical winding. 89 04 04

1989 10 04

West Wickham church turned to Cambridge Climbing and Caving Club when it needed the help restoring its historic clock. Steve Kirk abseiled down the tower to replace the hands on the timepiece. The clock originally belonged to St Peter's church in Duxford where it was installed in 1791. It was bought for the village in 1954 by Miss Dulce Taylor of Manor Farm. Now it will have electric wiring thanks to a bequest from her sister. 89 10 04

1990 10 15

West Wickham barn destroyed by fire – 90 10 15b

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